

ALL TIED UP

Top 10 deployment uses for 550 cord

by Airman staff

It's thin, strong, resilient and possibly the one thing, besides your extra undies, that you don't want to forget to pack with your deployment gear — parachute cord. Known to many as 550 cord, this super utility item is not only useful for jumping out of airplanes (hence the "parachute"), but works wonders in the deployed environment. Why 550 you ask? Because it can withstand up to 550 pounds.

Any application that calls for strength, durability and mildew resistance — 550 cord is "your man." Use it as is, straight off the spool, or divide the inner strands for fishing line, dental floss, or thread to sew up a war wound.

The usefulness of this cord is only limited by imagination. So the Airman staff summed up what we consider the "Top 10 deployment uses for 550 cord." Though we know the list is not all inclusive, we consider these 10 the most functional and entertaining.

1 Tent divider

Getting too much visual information from your tent mate, string up some modesty with an extra blanket or poncho. For a groovy appeal, add vertical strings with beads.



2 Weave a "buddy bracelet"

Start a new fad and weave a "buddy bracelet." Unlike other bracelets that have been outlawed for uniform wear, green 550 cord will always be in style. Not only that, but it's easy to wash and can be adjusted to any wrist size. If the correct knot is used, it can also be easily removed. And if you run out of cord for the other uses, just unravel your bracelet!

3 Lanyard items to your web belt

Don't find yourself "without," keep things with you like penlights and pistols. Those summer camp square braids are still cool.

4 Plumb line

Need to ensure something is straight up and down? Tent pole, volleyball pole, poster of the Olsen twins? Just tie a small weight on one end of the cord, then hold the other end near the top of the object you want straight. Once the weight quits wobbling around, you've got a plumb line.

5

Weave a hammock

Whether a master weaver, or just able to download the handbook from the Internet, once you've knotted together a hammock, you'll either be the envy of everyone in camp, or known as the person with the most amount of time to waste. You'll need nearly 800 feet of cord, tireless hands and an inordinate amount of time and patience. But once you're done, your R&R is located in your tent.

6

Soap on a rope

It's not what you think. This is actually a good idea. It's like making a little hammock for your soap, which will not only allow it to dry quickly, but make it easier to carry.

7

Emergency shoe laces or belt

Figure several feet for each boot, melting the ends to prevent fraying.

8

Sunglasses strap

While blasting down a bumpy road dodging IEDs in a HUMVEE, nothing says battle ready better than knowing your shades aren't going anywhere.

9

Tie up unruly tent mates

Deployment length can sometimes wear on relationships, particularly those with tent mates. If your tent mate is resembling more of a shadow, play "David Copperfield" and see if he can get loose while you grab some time alone.

10

Couch

Sometimes you just need to lean back and relax without having to lie down. Tie two cots together and you've got yourself a couch — next step, recliner and loveseat.

Got more clever uses for 550 cord? Send them to editor@afnews.af.mil and we'll post them on our Web site at www.af.mil/news/airman.

